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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000879

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SUBJECT: READ OUT FROM MARCH 11 MCNS

Classified By: Charge d, Affaires Daniel V. Speckhard, reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Maliki presided over the March 11 meeting of the Ministerial Committee for National Security, during which:

-- Maliki requested his cabinet focus their efforts on securing Diyala, the 'most dangerous place in Iraq.'

-- Minister of Industry Twazi Al-Hariri pleaded for government assistance in securing state owned-enterprises within the Al Taji and Al Tarmiyah corridor where: employees have fled; operations have halted; and the facility protection services have proven useless.

-- Minister of Finance Bayan Jabr, like last week, rebuffed the National Security Advisor's weapons buyback proposal for Baghdad.

-- Minister of Interior Jawad Bolani said his ministry may not be able to complete all permanent weapon licenses for personal security details by May 1 as desired by MNF-I. National Security Advisor Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie advocated against limit the issuing of weapons licenses to the MOI as desired by MNF-I. END SUMMARY.

COMMITMENT TO DIYALA  
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12. (C) Prime Minister Maliki said the security situation in Diyala was intolerable and the government must bring the province under control. He described a support council that provincial officials and residents recently established to address the multitude of problems. Maliki said he expects the central government to support this group and directed that MOD, MOI and other relevant ministries participate in Monday's Council meeting in Baghdad. MNF-I Commanding General offered MNF-I participation.

13. (C) Maliki said more security forces were needed to stabilize Diyala. Bolani agreed, saying while the new provincial police chief is 'excellent' and many police members are 'good', the police service is riddled with 'bad elements' that contribute to the chaos. He also said the current security forces in Diyala cannot match the strength and sophistication of the Diyala enemies - Al Qaeda, Saddamists, and other hardcore extremists.

14. (C) Minister of Defense Abdul Qader said while the

situation in Diyala was not as grave as many people are describing it to be, he estimated that two brigades would be needed to calm the situation. He cautioned, however, against fragmenting the forces already committed to Baghdad and noted that a CF Strker battalion would soon be up there to reinforce the effort. He recommended that before any more troops are committed, the GOI with participation from MNF-I, conduct a thorough needs assessment. He warned that without a coordinated plan carried out by one central headquarters in Diyala chances of success were minimal.

15. (C) General Petraeus agreed that Diyala was a serious issue and assured the Prime Minister that more security assistance was on the way. He said a Coalition Stryker battalion was headed to Diyala in the next few days and that the arrival of the three U.S. brigades to Baghdad in the next several months would also help the situation as the latter brigades are to focus on securing the Baghdad belts. Petraeus recommended that the GOI look at how best to speed up Iraqi Police creation in Diyala, without creating tribal militias, similar to what is being done in Anbar. He stated that a central command is vital and noted that the Commander of the 5th Iraqi Army Division needs to move his headquarters from Kirkush to the provincial capital, Baqubah. This would entail establishing one ISF-MNF coordination headquarters, gaining tribal support, and expediting the hiring of local Iraqis for the security forces.

16. (C) Deputy Prime Minister Zawba'i cautioned that force is only part of the solution to Diyala. If the major factions in Diyala, the Kurds, Sunni, and Shia and various tribes do not unite politically, the terrorists will continue to achieve success against the currently divided populace. Zawba'i stated that the political solution between the major sects must occur before success could be attained in the military fight against AQI.

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MINISTER OF INDUSTRY PLEA FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE  
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17. (C) Minister of Industry Twazi Al-Hariri requested security assistance for ten state-owned companies and its employees located north of Baghdad between Al Taji and Al Tarmiyah. He said the deteriorating security situation in this area has resulted in the halting of all facility operations and the displacement of hundreds of local employees. He said the current facility protection service has proven ineffective and corrupt. He said without military or police assistance, the situation would remain as is and the vacated buildings vulnerable to 'terrorist' takeover.

18. (C) Bolani and Qader said they would speak with their respective force commanders in the field to see what assistance is currently being provided in the area, while Rubaie asked for a needs- assessment to be completed on the issue. Maliki stressed that the security force, the Samarra Brigade that was currently being stood up to operate in the Taji zone would be tasked to help with the Industry situation. Bolani emphasized his Ministry was busy developing a reform program for the overall FPS and could also ameliorate the problems in the longer term.

WEAPONS BUY-BACK PROPOSAL STILL NOT SOLD  
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19. (C) Deputy National Security Advisor, Dr. Safi Safaa outlined a weapons buyback program for Baghdad. He said the program was designed as a 'carrot-stick' mechanism. Iraqis who turn in certain types of weapons to district joint security operations centers would be rewarded with less-than-market payments. Each district headquarters would have an expert committee to evaluate the received weapons and the program would be time limited. After the time period expired, Iraqis found with these categories of weapons would

have them confiscated and be arrested. Similar to last week, the Minister of Finance Bayan Jabr opposed the concept, saying the program was a waste of government money and would not improve security. The MoD chimed in, arguing that millions of weapons are flowing across the borders and citizens may try to dig up old mines along the border regions to sell back, thus exacerbating the situation.

#### WEAPONS LICENCES PROGRAM IN FLUX

¶10. (C) Bolani said his ministry needs to vet license applicants, and although they can produce 2000 per day, the might not be able to issue permanent weapon licenses to all Iraqi ministry security personnel by May 1 as desired by MNF-I. He said the full process would take much longer. He said no one even knows the size of the PSD population, and Abdul Qader added that the MOD alone has between 10,000 and 12,000. Rubaie, supported by Iraqi National Intelligence Service representative, advocated retention of the current weapon license issuing practice established by a Prime Minister directive. This directive authorizes NSA, INIS, MOD, and Minister of the State for National Security to issue weapons licenses to its staff. They believe this policy is more appropriate for Iraq than MNF-I's proposal to restrict licensing to MOI.

SPECKHARD